REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are now pending in the application. Claims 1-16 stand rejected. The Examiner is respectfully requested to add new claims 17-23, which recite subject matter fully supported in the specification as originally filed at paragraphs [0038] through [0044]. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 7-9, 12-14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Sammon, Jr. et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,012,051). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sammon, Jr. et al. is generally directed toward formulating a consumer profile and applying it to a product domain. In particular, Sammon, Jr. et al. is directed toward querying a domain of products related to attributes concerning inherent product characteristics based on a user profile composed of variables (scalar values) to be applied to the inherent product characteristics. To this end, a user profile is created by a question and answer sequencer, which poses questions about product attributes and requires the user to respond by expressing scalar values respective of the inherent product attributes. For example, Figure 4 illustrates a posed question about performance of automobile products, and the user is permitted to respond by selecting a position on a bivalent spectrum related to automobile performance and fuel efficiency. Figure 14 illustrates that these attributes relate directly to immutable product characteristics. Other questions posed in Figures 10-13 also relate directly to immutable product characteristics. Sammon, Jr. et al., thus, does not teach assigning

qualitative attributes to products in the database that do not reflect actual properties of products, but rather give information about potential users and/or intended uses of the products.

Applicants' claimed invention is generally directed to a networked product selection system. In particular, Applicants' claimed invention is directed to a product selection system employing a database of products having qualitative attributes assigned to them; namely information about potential users and/or intended uses of the products. Independent claims 1 and 14 have been amended to recite related subject matter fully supported in the application as originally filed at paragraphs [0038] through [0040]. For example, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite "a database of products having qualitative attributes assigned to the products that reflects information about potential users of the products . . . and the selections made by the system are dependent upon the qualitative attributes assigned to the products". Also, independent claim 14 has been amended to recite "a database of products having qualitative attributes assigned to the products that reflect information about intended uses of the products . . . and the selections made by the system are dependent upon the qualitative attributes assigned to the products".

These differences are significant because an expert system posing questions about the user and/or intended use of the product is rendered capable of directing users to products based in part on the characteristics of the user or intended product use rather than solely based on the characteristics of the products. This functionality is advantageous because the qualitative attributes are updatable, whereas the inherent product characteristics are immutable. Accordingly, products can be directed and

redirected toward and away from potential users and/or intended uses without having to redesign the questions being posed or any stored user profiles. Rather, a curator, such as a manufacturer of a product, can merely edit the assignment of qualitative attributes to the product as explained in paragraph [0039] of the application as originally filed.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claims 1 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), along with rejection on these grounds of all claims dependent therefrom.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5-6, 10-11, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sammon, Jr. et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,012,051). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner takes Official Notice that product database updating techniques are well known in the art.

Applicant respectfully refers the Examiner to Remarks made above with respect to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 5-6, 10-11, and 15 based on their dependency from allowable base claims.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt

and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: _Christopher M. Brock_
Christopher M. Brock
Reg. No. 27313

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

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